



JSTOR

*Research Basics*

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for Students

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Lesson Scripts	7
Lesson Connect Activities	43
Lesson Connect Activity Rubrics	62

For more information and suggestions, please contact  
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## INSTRUCTOR RESOURCE GUIDE

Welcome! This Instructor Resource Guide will familiarize you with the contents of Research Basics for Students (“Research Basics” for short). Research Basics is a series of self-paced, online lesson modules that provide instruction and practice in scholarly research skills. This introductory-level course covers several important areas of learning under the broad heading of Information Literacy, such as accessing and finding suitable scholarly source material, assessing academic credibility, creating and using appropriate citations, and avoiding plagiarism. On completion of the three modules, learners will be versed in topics essential for college readiness.

Research Basics is a program produced by JSTOR that aims to partner with librarians and teachers to tackle the complex task of helping students learn how to conduct scholarly research alongside other academic pursuits and amid an environment of information overload. The course draws upon JSTOR’s journal content as well as many other suitable resources to illustrate the basics of a solid, digital research practice.

This course will be used by students with different amounts of familiarity with research; some students may be less accustomed to the content covered. Some schools will choose to have the librarian lead the course, while others may offer it to students in Language Arts or Social Studies classrooms, or introductory college courses. Keep flexibility in mind as you decide how to incorporate the modules into your lessons on information literacy, understanding scholarly content and sources, and properly referencing academic material.

### OVERVIEW

College-bound high school students and first-year or new college students are the audience for Research Basics, and the course has been developed for use by an individual learner. The course can be found at [guides.jstor.org/researchbasics](https://guides.jstor.org/researchbasics). Please share this URL with your students.

Upon registration, students will encounter three learning modules divided into lessons. First, they will watch short videos to learn about particular research concepts. Then, they will practice a few activities before moving ahead. On completion of a module, learners take an assessment of their understanding.

In addition to the self-paced component, each of the lessons in the course contains an additional activity, available in this guide. These activities are designed to connect the learning in the course with the students' actual library and research experience. Each activity is followed by a sample response and guidelines for delivering it. You may use the activities in class, as group activities, or as individual homework assignments. Rubrics for your evaluation of the work are provided at the end of this guide. Lesson scripts are included for your convenience and for those who cannot use audio for the lesson content.

## ORGANIZATION

The course consists of three separate modules comprised of three lessons each for a total of nine lessons. Lessons include the following elements:

- » **Content introduction:** Information on the topic is presented as a video. Students may watch the video, read the script, or do both.
- » **Practice activities:** Following the content presentation, learners stay motivated and engaged to learn through practice activities that help them retain the new information presented. These activities are ungraded, but feedback is provided. Learners are able to try the review activities as many times as needed for understanding of the concepts.
- » **Connect activities:** As an optional group or homework assignment, each lesson contains a corresponding task that helps learners apply what they've learned into the real world. Connect activities are found at the end of this guide.
- » **Module Assessment:** To assess understanding, learners complete an assessment at the end of each online module, comprised of multiple-choice, true/false, and matching items for instant feedback. This assessment is meant to gauge learning informally and is not structured to report to instructor grade books at this time.  
(Research Basics is in beta testing.)

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Before teaching the module, review this guide and acquaint yourself with the material. Become familiar with the content and activities. Take notes and highlight key points.

### Components (Watch, Practice quiz, Assessment)

Take time to review the videos and scripts so you can anticipate the types of questions students may ask. Also review the practice activities, which students will complete after they watch each video. Try the module assessment to see what types of information is assessed.

## **Connect Activities**

Connect activities are optional, offline exercises that may be assigned as a group activity or as homework. Review the Connect activities in advance and decide how you wish to assign and schedule each one. You may adapt them as needed to be relevant to what your students are studying.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

**Explain the Learning Objectives.** Before beginning each module and lesson, explain the learning objectives to students. The following module and lesson objectives have been designed to focus the training on specific topics for mastery—use them to reinforce the purpose of the training throughout the sessions:

### **Learning Objectives**

#### *Module 1: Effective Searching*

Students will learn how to successfully apply search techniques while conducting their scholarly research.

Lesson 1: Learners will use online library search tools to find scholarly content

Lesson 2: Learners will apply smart searching methods to uncover useful scholarly content

Lesson 3: Learners will manage information overload

#### *Module 2: Establishing Credibility*

Students will learn how to assess sources for credibility prior to using them in scholarly research.

Lesson 1: Learners will identify scholarly source material for proven academic attributes.

Lesson 2: Learners will differentiate popular and scholarly sources and understand concept of relevance

Lesson 3: Learners will verify online scholarly resources for acceptable use in research.

#### *Module 3: Citing Scholarly Work*

Students will master the creation of academic citations and avoid plagiarism in their writing.

Lesson 1: Learners will produce accurate scholarly citations following MLA or APA style

Lesson 2: Learners will understand and follow citation best practices to avoid plagiarism

Lesson 3: Learners will prepare endnotes and bibliographies according to academic guidelines

**Establish Expectations.** Explain the format of each element of the program to students. Set ground rules for behavior and performance, and clearly communicate them to students. You may wish to answer the following questions for students:

- » How long will the training last? Each lesson video is between 6-10 minutes long. Allow up to 30 minutes for the practice activities, though students should be able to complete them in well under that time limit. A lesson block, including your introduction, should take no more than 60 minutes.
- » Will there be breaks? It's advisable to allow a break between each lesson, or schedule a module over the course of a few days or a week.
- » If you assign a Connect activity, how and where are students expected to complete it? Activities vary, and some involve the use of the Internet. Make sure students have the tools and time they need to get them done.

**Provide feedback and closure.** Keep in mind that students at a variety of levels of experience with academic resources are using this course, and some students will have had little exposure before learning and testing themselves in the online learning portion. Talk about the questions and feedback with students who are concerned about their quiz grades. Review the concepts and let them know how they are doing. Encourage them to watch the videos a second time if helpful, or to try the practice activities again – there is no limit on how many times they may consume them. Connect activities may be graded or assigned as peer evaluation. Provide encouragement and review specific problem areas with students.

## **MATERIALS**

The following pages contain the learning materials you will need to work with Research Basics in class. Lesson scripts are paired with Connect activities and any answer keys or samples. Rubrics follow at the end of the guide.

- » LESSON SCRIPTS
- » CONNECT ACTIVITIES
- » ANSWERS, RUBRICS, SAMPLES

We hope you and your students will enjoy using Research Basics to develop their scholarly research skills. Let's begin!

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MODULE 1: EFFECTIVE SEARCHING  
LESSON 1: USING LIBRARY TOOLS

**Title**

Effective Searching

Module 1, Lesson 1

Using Library Tools

**Introduction**

Imagine you've been assigned a research paper on the life of a writer you've never heard of. What are the first steps you take to find sources? Do you start with Google? If you can't find what you're looking for right away, what do you do next? And how do you wade through thousands of search results to find the ones you really want?

In this lesson, we'll talk about beginning your research using library databases. A database is an electronic catalog that gives you information about how to find publications like books or articles. The information about each individual publication is called a citation. You can use this information to locate the publication in your library or online. Sometimes the full text of the publication will be available with the citation.

Most databases focus on specific topics, such as genealogy or art history, so no single database will contain information about all existing publications. Once you find the database you want, you can search to find publications that are even more closely related to your topic.

In this lesson, you will learn how to find out what resources are available, how to decide on the best places to search, and how to make sure you have access to the tools you need.

**Subject Guides**

Your first step is to see what's available to you. Take a look at your library's website. Most libraries provide a list of the databases available to their users. On your library's website, look for a "subject guide," or a listing of databases sorted by subject. You may need a username and password to access this portion of your library's website, so talk to your librarian if you run into any problems.

Let's get started by looking for sources for an academic article on the life of the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova. We'll use the Library of Congress's website for this search.

Think about your topic: What field or fields does it fall within? No database has everything, so look for a collection whose focus is likely to include your topic. You're looking for information about a poet, so it makes sense to look for sources that focus on poetry or writing. Under the Arts and Humanities heading, you'll see a link to the Language and Literature section. This is a good place to start your search because you already know these sources are likely to be relevant to your topic.

In some cases, it can also be helpful to narrow down your sources by type. For example, since you're looking for broad, general information about Anna Akhmatova's life, a biography would be a good starting place. If you were trying to find critical reviews of her work, however, you might want to narrow your search to focus on book reviews or essays of literary criticism.

### **Predict**

Your next step is to look at the specific tools available and predict which ones are most likely to contain the information you want. Some libraries allow you to do a single search that searches multiple databases, but many libraries do not—in which case you will need to search each database individually. Either way, your time is important. Limiting your search to the most relevant tools for your topic will give you a better-focused set of results to choose from.

Here's the list of the library's Language and Literature resources. Even within this subtopic, there are nearly 100 resources! However, as you look through the descriptions, it's clear that many of these will not be useful sources for your topic. You are looking for biographical information on a Russian poet, so it's not likely that "African Writers Series" or the "Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature" will have much for you—these databases focus on writers from other locations.

Some of the more general sources look like they could be of use for your search. With over a half-million biographies, "Biography in Context" seems like a useful place to look for the information you're seeking. So does "Columbia Granger's World of Poetry," which includes biographies. You may also be able to use the "Dictionary of Literary Biography."

There are also a few more specific tools that might be promising for this topic. Look at the "Fundamental Digital Library of Russian Literature and Folklore" and the "Russian Virtual Library." These databases focus only on Russian literature, so they would be likely to contain some of the information you're looking for.

### **Rank**

Now that you've selected a few places to start searching, take a moment to rank them in order of their usefulness for your specific topic and needs. If you start with the best database for this particular search, you might just find what you need, and never need to look through the other databases you selected.



From the set of nearly 100 Language and Literature databases, you found five that looked like they might be useful:

- » Biography in Context
- » Columbia Granger's World of Poetry
- » Dictionary of Literary Biography
- » Fundamental Digital Library of Russian Literature and Folklore
- » Russian Virtual Library

In most cases, it makes sense to start with the resources that are most closely related to your topic. So ranking these databases in order, you have:

1. **Fundamental Digital Library of Russian Literature and Folklore and Russian Virtual Library:** These sources are both specific to Russian literature and are the likeliest places to find good information about a Russian poet.
2. **Columbia Granger's World of Poetry and Dictionary of Literary Biography:** These two sources are one notch up from a general biography database. Columbia Granger is specific to poetry and contains biographies, and the Dictionary of Literary Biography is made up entirely of biographies of writers.
3. **Biography in Context:** This is a general database of biographies that doesn't focus specifically on Russia or literature, so you should save it for last.

### Knowledge

After you've found the best resources for your search and ranked them in order, it's time to think about the practicalities of starting your research.

First, make sure you have knowledge you need to use a given resource. You can do this by reviewing the descriptions of your selected databases to make sure they're appropriate for your research. For example, let's take a look again at the Russian Virtual Library, one of the top-ranked choices from the last step.

What does this description tell you? It's free and intended for a variety of different types of users; that's all good information. But then you get to the last sentence and discover that it's in Russian. Unless you're fortunate enough to be fluent, you don't have the necessary knowledge for this to be a useful resource.

### Access

It's also important to be sure that you can actually get access to the resources you've decided on. In some cases, a single username and password will get you access to your library's subject guides and all library supported databases. In other cases, you

may need different login information for different resources. It's a good idea to talk to your librarian about how best to access your library's resources from both in and outside of the library building, as there are different procedures.

Some resources are freely accessible from anywhere, with no login required. Some are accessible from outside the library, or "remotely," but you need a username and password to use them. And some resources may only be accessed from a computer on the library network, or "on-site," meaning that you'll need to make a trip to the library to use them. This isn't a bad thing, and the information you find will often make the trip worthwhile. But knowing this will help you plan how much time and energy each part of your research might take.

You should also look at the kind of content the database offers. Some databases provide the full text of every single article that appears as a search result. Other databases do not provide any actual articles, just the citations themselves along with abstracts or summaries, which can be helpful in deciding if the article has the information you need. For these types of databases, you'll need to talk to your librarian about how to access the articles you find. Many databases provide a mix of full-text articles, abstracts, and citations. Know what your database offers so that you can plan your research accordingly.

### **Ask a Librarian**

You can always contact your librarian with questions about how to access the library's resources, whether it's finding the full text of a specific article or figuring out what database to start your search with. Their main job is to help connect you with the information you're looking for. Many libraries offer reference assistance by email and live chat. Some are even available 24 hours a day. It's easier than ever to get in touch with an expert who can make your research process shorter and smoother.

### **Next Steps**

- » You will complete a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, it's on to Lesson 2, Smart Searching Methods.
- » At the end of Module 1, you'll take an assessment.

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MODULE 1: EFFECTIVE SEARCHING  
LESSON 2: SMART SEARCHING METHODS

**Title**

Effective Searching

Module 1, Lesson 2

Smart Searching Methods

**Introduction**

Once you've determined which of your library's databases are likely to contain the information you need, the next step is to formulate a search strategy. In this lesson, you'll learn the following steps in searching successfully:

- » Choose the right words and phrases for your topic and purpose
- » Combine them into a well-crafted search string that tells the database what you want
- » Evaluate your results and adjust your search strategy if needed

**Choosing Search Terms**

Think of a scholarly database as a vault that holds thousands upon thousands of articles, books, and other sources. Your key to unlock this vault is your search string: the set of words, phrases, and punctuation you enter into a search box to tell the database what you're looking for. Every database will look and function a little differently, but you can almost always use the same strategies to get good results.

First, try to match your terms with the language in the sources you'd like to find—that is, think of the terminology that is most likely to be used by scholars writing about your topic. These key words and phrases will help connect you with the most relevant results. Scholarly publications use scholarly, formal language. So if you come up with two equivalent words or phrases, it might help to choose the one that seems more formal and less casual. The formal term *influenza* brings up more search results than the colloquial term *flu*.

Next, think of synonyms and related terms that might be used instead of the main terms you're searching. For example, in a search about seventeenth-century New York City, you might also want to use the search term *New Amsterdam*, which was the city's official name at that time. In a search about cooking, you might want to use the related

term *recipes*; it's not exactly a synonym, but it will yield results that are closely related to your topic.

### Putting Terms Together

Once you've decided on a set of terms to use, it's time to begin putting them together. The way you combine your search terms will serve as a set of instructions for the database, telling it what you want to see and what you don't.

For more precise results, use quotation marks around multi-word search terms. This is known as a phrase search. It tells the database to retrieve only results where these words are used together in a certain order. If you're researching the theatrical group Blue Man Group, a key word search for *blue man group* will retrieve any article where these three words appear, even if they are separated by other words or are out of order. On the other hand, a phrase search for "*blue man group*" in quotation marks will retrieve only articles where the words appear together in that order. The second group of search results is much smaller and easier to review.

### Boolean Operators

Consider using special words called Boolean operators: AND, OR, and NOT. These words give the database additional information about how to process a search that uses more than one term. Let's look at some examples.

- » AND tells the database to retrieve all of the results that contain **both** Term A and Term B. It narrows the search by leaving out results in which one term, but not the other, is used.
- » OR tells the database to retrieve all of the results that contain **either** Term A or Term B. It expands the search to include all instances where either term appears. This will be the largest set of results — remember it as "OR means more."
- » NOT tells the database to include one term but exclude the other. It narrows the search by leaving out any result that contains the second term.

A Boolean operator should always appear in all capital letters. This tells the database to use the capitalized word as an instruction, not as a word that is part of your search.

You can use Boolean operators not just with single words, but with phrases in quotation marks. For example, to search for information on bicycle lanes and traffic safety, link the two phrases together with AND.

For a more complex search, you can use parentheses to group a set of Boolean operators. The database will perform the commands inside the parentheses first, then process the results. In this example, the search string will find one set of results that use either the term *college* or the term *post-secondary education*, find the results that discuss both Texas and Louisiana, and then show only the results that overlap.

## Assessing Search Results

Your next step is to assess your search results and see how they line up with your informational needs. Does the set of search results fit all the criteria of your query?

You can often change the way your search results display, and sometimes this is helpful in seeing what exactly is there. Sorting by date allows you to see the newest results first and the oldest last, or vice versa. This can give you a sense of whether your search results are complete enough. If the most recent source is 20 years old, you may need to do a new search that yields a more current set of results, depending on your topic. Sort your results by date, using the year and, if possible, the month, to see which results are most current.

You can also choose to display results by relevance. This gives you a quick sense of how many articles really focus on your search terms. If there are a couple of pages of articles that look promising, that may be a sign that you have a good set of search results. On the other hand, if only one or two of the articles in your list are truly relevant to your topic, it may be time to rethink your search strategy.

A search that is too specific may yield few or no results. Try doing your search again with one or more general terms in your search string. When you have a good set of results, narrow your search to full-text articles whenever possible. This will ensure that all of your results are immediately accessible.

## Build on Good Sources

Once you've discovered one or more sources that are a good fit, you can use them as a springboard to find additional content. There are two ways to capitalize on a useful source.

First, take a look at the references. This is a good way to find related articles or books. You may also find that the same author has published and cited previous works on the same topic.

Second, look at the database record for the source. Many databases assign subject headings to describe the content of an article or book. These terms may be a person's name, a specialized term, or another word or phrase that explains what the source is about. Clicking on the subject heading will get you a list of other articles and books that share the same subject heading.

## Next Steps

- » You will complete a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, it's on to Lesson 3, Managing Information Overload.
- » At the end of Module 1, you'll take an assessment.

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MODULE 1: EFFECTIVE SEARCHING  
LESSON 3: MANAGING INFORMATION OVERLOAD

**Title**

Effective Searching

Module 1, Lesson 3

Managing Information Overload

**Introduction**

After you feel confident selecting search terms and constructing a search string, you'll find yourself with a list of search results that might look great—or might be overwhelming. You might also find yourself with search results that are related to your topic, but are not specifically what you need. In this lesson, you'll learn strategies for managing information overload, including:

- » How to plan your research efficiently based on your project outline
- » How to refine your search for a manageable set of relevant results
- » How to document your sources so that they're easier to access and use

**Project Planning**

Before you begin the search process, be sure to review your project outline. Aligning your search with the project's requirements will save you time in the long run. For example, if your assignment specifies that you use "recent" or "current" sources, you will probably want to use the advanced search option to narrow the dates on your search. That way, you won't waste time reviewing resources that aren't appropriate for your assignment.

You will be most successful in your scholarly research if you plan ahead and give yourself extra time for potential complications or changes. For example, imagine a really promising citation for an article that fits your information needs exactly—except that the full text of the article isn't available through your database. If you discover this citation the day before your project is due, you don't have any options for finding the full article. But if you have a week of lead time, you might ask your librarian for help and discover that the article is available via interlibrary loan in a few days' time.

Keeping your project outline at the forefront will also help you know when to stop searching for a specific subtopic and move on to other needed information. You'll be most efficient if you stop when you have enough information to complete your work.

## Your Search Results

When you've conducted your initial search, take a look at the results to get a sense of how effective your search string is.

First, how many results are there? For example, if your search produces no results, or very few results, that may not be enough material for you to work with. With such a small set of results, you should also consider the possibility that you might be excluding some useful sources. If your search produces 15,000 results, on the other hand, it's not realistic to think you'll be able to review all of them to find the useful ones.

Next, how relevant do the results seem at a glance? Have you put them in order by relevance? Scan through the results and see what pops out at you. Do they seem too technical, too broad, or just plain irrelevant? Are there terms that appear over and over — and if so, are those terms useful for your topic?

Think of searching as a process, not an event. It's pretty unusual to get a perfect, useful, relevant set of results from the very first search string you enter.

Next, you'll learn how to adjust your search to get a broader or narrower set of results.

## Narrowing Search Results

If you're overwhelmed with search results, there are several ways to work toward a more useful and workable set of results.

First, double-check the construction of your search string. If you've used a set of quotation marks or a set of parentheses, make sure it's closed correctly and encloses the intended terms. Make sure that any Boolean operators, like AND or OR, are capitalized.

Next, scan the first page or two of results and see how you might refine them. Most databases include an "advanced search" screen that allows you to be more specific about what results you want to see. Advanced search capabilities vary from one database to another, but these are a few common options to customize your search:

- » **Date:** You can choose results published before or after a certain date, or within a certain date range.
- » **Item type:** You can select results by publication type: for example, only books, only journal articles, or only book reviews.
- » **Discipline:** In some cases, you can narrow your search to publications in a certain field or discipline.
- » **Publication title:** You can search only for articles published in a certain journal.
- » **Full text:** Some databases do not provide full-text access to every article that they include. In these cases, you can usually limit your search so that you see only results

where the full text is available. You may choose to find items that include your search terms anywhere in the text, or only those that include your search terms in the title.

- » **Language:** You can restrict your search to materials in a certain language.

Some databases with a broader scope offer the option to restrict your search to peer-reviewed journals only, or may allow you to narrow your search to include only results that list references.

After you've used the advanced search options to narrow down your search, reassess the results and adjust your search string accordingly. Do you keep seeing a term or idea that isn't relevant to your research? Use the NOT operator to exclude it from your next set of search results. Do you see a term that is useful but isn't in your search string? Using AND to add it to your search string will narrow down the current set of results.

You might also reassess the terms you've used. Is there a more specific version that's likely to get you fewer results—and results that are more specific to your topic? A search for "*opera singers*" yields a lot of results, but a search for the more specific term "*mezzo sopranos*" brings up a much smaller set.

Finally, think about adding terms that narrow the search by geography, time, or discipline. A search for surfing will give you a lot of results, probably too many to wade through. But a search about *surfing in Kauai*, a search about *surfing in the 1920s*, or a search about the *physiology of surfers* will give you a much more focused, manageable set of results.

What if you've constructed a really solid search string and refined your results as far as possible, but still have too many results to sift through? This might be a good time to reassess the database you're using. Is there another that might be better tailored to your topic?

If you're using the best database with your best search skills and still flooded with search results, it's possible that your topic is just too broad. This is a good time to call on your librarian for guidance about how to use the library's resources to find the information you're looking for.

### **Too Few Results**

If your search gives you fewer results than you had hoped or expected, you can make a few simple changes to your search string that will bring you a larger set of results.

First, rethink your terminology. If you've used a very specialized term, consider changing it to a broader term. For example, the specialized term "*shin hanga*," a type



of Japanese woodblock printing, yields a very small set of results. But the broader term “*Japanese woodblock printing*” gives you a much larger set of results to work with.

Second, consider minor adjustments to the way your search string is constructed. If you’ve connected two words using AND, think about changing the operator to OR, which will produce a larger set of results. You can also remove one of your search terms to increase the number of results.

Finally, try truncating a search term. Truncating is a way of reducing a word to its most basic part. This allows the database to pull up all of the forms of the word, instead of just the one you’ve entered. Most databases let you truncate using an asterisk. So a search for the truncated term *child\** will pull up results that use the words *child*, *child’s*, *children*, and *children’s*—whereas searching for *children’s* pulls up only the results that use the specific form of the word.

To truncate a search term, examine the search term you are using. What other variations of that word might be used in publications on the topic? Your goal is to reduce the word to its most basic form so that all of its other potential forms will come up in your search results. For example, if you’re looking for articles about how to teach music, use the truncated form *teach\** to include articles that use the words *teacher*, *teachers*, and *teaching*.

On the other hand, be aware that truncating a search term too much may bring in unrelated results. For example, if you are searching for information on staying in hostels, the truncated term *host\** will also get you results that discuss the unrelated topics of *hostesses*, *hostages*, and *hostility*. Truncating to *hostel\** will get you a more precise set of results about *hostels*, *hostelry*, and *hostelers*.

### **Staying Organized**

Your research, and ultimately the creation of your academic paper, will be easier and simpler if you take care to document your sources throughout your research.

When you’re searching a database, you will usually have the option to save chosen citations within a search session. This allows you to pick and choose citations as you adjust your search terms, and not have to worry about losing a promising lead.

Pay attention to how long these citations are saved. Some databases erase them after your search session ends, while others allow you to create a personal account and save them indefinitely. If you’re not sure, it never hurts to export your chosen citations to a text file before you wrap up your search session.

Some databases also offer you the option to save your search strings themselves, making it easier to move back and forth between multiple complex search strings.

## Citation Management

Many software packages and apps are available to help you organize your sources and avoid information overload as you move between different sources for your research. Check with your librarian to see which ones may be available through your library.

When you've collected citations within a database, you can choose to export your citations in a format compatible with many popular citation management programs. Functionality is different for each specific program, but generally, these programs can do some or all of the following:

- » Save full text of the articles you select
- » Allow you to add your own tags to sources
- » Search across the text of multiple articles
- » Produce citations in multiple formats

Choose a citation management program, or another way of managing your sources, before you start your research. This will streamline your research and ensure that you stay organized from the very beginning.

One final tip for keeping your sources organized: if you download copies of your articles, use a consistent naming convention that will keep them organized and help you remember their contents.

## Next Steps

Remember the question from the beginning of this module: where would you start finding information for a research paper about a writer you've never heard of? Now that you've learned how to evaluate your library's sources and construct an effective search string, maybe you can see why typing the person's name into Google isn't necessarily the best answer.

- » Next, we're going to move into a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in Module 1.
- » After you've completed these activities, it's time to move on to Module 2, where you will learn how to evaluate sources and determine how reliable they are for academic research.

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MODULE 2: ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY  
LESSON 1: THE A-B-Cs OF SCHOLARLY SOURCES

**Title**

Establishing Credibility

Module 2, Lesson 1

The A-B-Cs of Scholarly Sources

**Introduction**

Where would you go to get the news about a hurricane that's coming to your area? Facebook? The evening news? The website of the National Weather Service? Which of these sources would you trust the most? Why?

A trustworthy source has *credibility*. When doing research, it's important to ensure that the sources you select are credible. In this lesson, you will begin learning how to identify scholarly source material for academic research in school.

There are several ways to identify scholarly source material, and a good place to start is by examining prospective sources for certain academic attributes. You can think of them as the A-B-Cs of scholarly sources.

These attributes are helpful in interpreting the level of scholarship. In the lesson ahead, we'll look at sources and point out these attributes so that you can start to identify them on your own.

**Key Indicators**

An easy way to remember the key indicators of academic scholarship is by using your A-B-Cs: authority, bias, and content. Let's get started by investigating the topic of high-stakes testing.

**Authority**

To have authority means to be recognized as knowledgeable on a specific topic. There's a root word in "authority" that tells you what you're going to look at first: "author."

When you're considering a source, try to find the answers to these questions:

- » Is the author or authors clearly identified?
  
- » Does the author have scholarly credentials, or credentials within the appropriate field of expertise?

- » Is the author's affiliation apparent, such as where he or she works? If the author is a professor, are advanced degrees listed alongside his or her academic position?
- » Does the author have qualifications to write on the topic, such as an advanced degree in the field with several years of experience and research on the topic?
- » Does the publication have an author and an editor? The presence of an editor might imply a collection of articles, as opposed to a single piece by a single person. Be sure to note who the piece is actually written by. This should usually be a person in scholarly works with appropriate credentials.
- » Occasionally, an organization will serve as the author. In these cases, make sure that the organization has expertise and credibility in the field. You can usually determine this by reading the organization's bio, the same way you would read about an author.

Take a look at this excerpt from the education journal *Theory into Practice*. You can see the two authors clearly listed at the top of the page, along with their affiliations at the bottom of the page. Both authors work at well-known institutions, and one is a professor of education. These are good indicators that they have authority on this subject.

### **Bias**

It's important that academic scholarship is presented in an objective manner without bias. The peer review system is an established way to identify biases that might appear in scholarly research. In peer review, a work is evaluated by experts and published only if it meets the discipline's standards. It is also a way to ensure objectivity in assessing an academic article.

The peers selected for the review are:

- » In the same field as the author(s)
- » Proven to be objective and independent from the work they are reviewing for publication
- » Familiar enough with the body of work the article relates to in order to lend credibility to the publication of it
- » Able to make a formal declaration in the work attesting to their neutrality

In the excerpt from the *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, you can see a reference to peer review along with the information on what the journal stands for and what it looks for in the articles it publishes. The journal has greater authority because you can rely on its information being unbiased.

## Content

By examining the content, you can determine an article's suitability for scholarly research. Remember to look not only for relevant topical information, but also signs of scholarship. Here are some questions to consider:

- » Audience: is the work intended for other scholars or experts in the field? Does it use discipline-specific terminology?
- » Intent: why is the author publishing the article? Is it a report, a case study, or an in-depth analysis of a specific topic?
- » Level: does the article assume some basic knowledge on the readers' part? Is it written for peers, or to introduce the topic to laypersons?
- » Style: Are there illustrations, charts, and tables? If so, are they relevant to the content or are they "eye candy" meant to attract readers?
- » Tone: is it written using a professional tone and an academic style, or is it colloquial and casual, which is a sign it's not scholarly?

This excerpt from *The Elementary School Journal*, provides information on the source's credibility. As a researcher, knowing that the article is credible is just as important as finding out what it has to say about high-stakes testing. The title of the journal, *The Elementary School Journal*, doesn't tell us much about the level of content—but the subtitle of the article, "A Framework for Equitable Learning Opportunities," gives us a clue that this article is aimed at readers with some knowledge in the field, not at the general public. The article is presented in plain text, without any illustrations. These are all good indicators of a credible scholarly source.

Finally, think about the tone of the abstract. Look at this sentence: "Next, we provide examples of curriculum development and research programs to illustrate key components in the theoretical framework and to highlight how these programs address challenges in curriculum design and implementation." What are some words that describe the tone of this sentence? You might say it is complex, formal, or academic.

Now, look at this excerpt from another source on the topic of teaching science. "Do the research together with each student recording the information in a chart. Then do a quick discussion, ending with safety tips for each type of danger in your area. Have each student make a button with a safety tip and wear it this week. Or they could make an Earth Science Week button!" What are some words to describe the tone of this piece? You might say it is conversational, accessible, or straightforward. The casual tone of this writing is one clue that it does not come from a scholarly source.

## **Publisher**

We've discussed authors and their content, so now let's turn to the publisher that's responsible for the end product. The publisher plays an important role in establishing credibility. Without a legitimate publisher, it's difficult to confirm that a source is credible. When in doubt, look to the publisher to help steer you toward a credible source on which to base your scholarly work, and search for these clues:

- » Does the journal list an editorial board?
- » Is there a logo?
- » Has the journal won any awards? Is it affiliated with a well-known institution?
- » Is the blurb on the journal written in a scholarly manner for an academic audience?

Within a scholarly database listing, you will usually find a link that offers information about a journal. Here's an example from *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, published by Indiana University Press. A university affiliation is a good indicator of scholarly content. Notice whether there is a logo displaying the name. Information is included on its mission, editors, and editorial board. The tone is professional and the style is academic.

## **Next Steps**

- » Next, let's move into a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, it's on to Lesson 2, where you'll learn some additional strategies for identifying scholarly sources.
- » At the end of Module 2, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in this lesson.

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MODULE 2: ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY  
LESSON 2: ADDITIONAL WAYS OF IDENTIFYING SCHOLARLY SOURCES

**Title**

Establishing Credibility

Module 2, Lesson 2

Additional Ways of Identifying Scholarly Sources

**Introduction**

In this lesson, you will continue learning how to identify scholarly source material for academic research. We'll go over:

- » How to recognize signs of academic endorsement
- » How to determine whether a source is current and relevant
- » How to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources

These concepts will help you make good decisions on what to include in your future work.

Academic endorsement is an important indicator of scholarship. We'll explore the signs of academic endorsement together, and you will learn how to recognize them on your own.

We'll also tackle the concepts of relevance and currency in scholarship. You'll learn why they are important, and how they are different.

Finally, you'll learn how to choose appropriate sources for your research projects. We'll show you some specific ways you can identify the differences between scholarly and popular resources.

**Scan**

No one can be expected to read everything while they're searching for resources, so it's important to practice the art of scanning. If there's an abstract, scan for key words: words or phrases that relate to your topic and provide clues about the content of the article. Pay attention to the A-B-C clues you see (authority, bias, and content). If there is no abstract, scan for author, publisher, and key words. Key words should not only relate to your topic, but also be of a scholarly nature.

Get into the habit of "talking to the text" as you scan, whether you're looking at a computer screen or a piece of paper. Highlight important words and phrases, record questions or

ideas that come up, and make notes about how this material might connect to other things you know.

If you were investigating the topic of high-stakes testing, what would you notice about the abstract and key words for this article? As you scan this abstract, you might highlight the key words “high-stakes testing,” which tell you that it relates to your topic. You might mark phrases like “qualitative metasynthesis” or “template analysis” with a question mark if you’re not sure what they mean. The use of these complex and specialized terms indicate that this is a scholarly source. Remember:

- » Abstract: If there’s an abstract, read it first, checking for key words and concepts.
- » Scan: Even if there isn’t an abstract, scan for key words and formal language structure.

### **References: Bibliography**

Other signs of academic endorsement can be found by examining the work’s bibliography. Review your sources’ reference information to find signs of academic endorsement.

Look at the bibliography: is the article formulated from other scholarship? If there is no bibliography, that could be a sign that a source is *not* scholarly.

### **References: Citations**

Check for citations within the text of the article. Have the authors backed up their statements with references to other scholarly sources?

You can see that this author is citing research that supports her statements. This tells you that her assertions are based on study in the field, and it indicates that other scholars share her views. This foundation is a good indicator of scholarly content. If the author provides no citations, it could be a sign that the source is *not* scholarly.

In many cases, you can also find out who is citing the source you’re looking at. If other scholars are using it as a source in their own research, that could be a sign of a well-respected scholarly source. This is called a “*cited by search*” or a “reverse citation search.” Many databases provide a link to this search from an article’s citation page.

In this case, a list of articles that have cited the one you’re looking at display when the link is clicked. This tells you that other scholars in the field consider this article a reliable source.

### **Currency**

Once you’ve determined that a work is scholarly, it’s important that you make sure the sources you use are also **current** and **relevant**. When you assess the currency of a source, you’re asking, “How new is this information? Has anything changed since this was published?”



Here are a few clues that can help you decide whether a source is current.

- » Publication or revision date: does the source have one? If not, you really have no way to tell whether it's outdated. A scholarly source should always include a publication date.
- » How recent are the publication dates of the works cited in its bibliography? If a new article cites only articles from 20 years ago, consider whether it might be omitting more recent sources.
- » Has the information been revised, updated, or retracted? Is newer information available?
- » Also consider your topic: is information about it still changing or being discovered, such as in the fields of medicine or technology? If so, you may want to look for only very current sources. On the other hand, if you are writing about an event in ancient history, it may be fine to use older sources.

### **Relevance**

The question of relevance is one that only you can answer: how useful is a source for your purpose?

- » Is it written at an appropriate level?
- » Is it too broad or too specific?
- » Does it answer a question or fill a need in your research?
- » Does it add something new?

### **Scholarly vs. Popular Sources**

So far, we've looked at a variety of different academic journal excerpts from scholarly databases. But what about sources you find using Google or other search engines? You can use the principles you've learned to evaluate sources found online. Here's how: Look for publishing information.

Consider Slate. It's got an established publisher, a logo, and an author. What is it missing? Peer review. What about style? It's in color with an accessible and friendly tone and layout. Does that seem scholarly?

Look at Time Out From Testing. Their mission statement says they are "committed to a 'time-out' from excessive and high stakes exams." Can you detect bias in that statement?

Some types of information may appear credible but not scholarly. They may be written by thought leaders in the area you're researching, but the outlet for the article is not itself part of the scholarly record. In other cases, the author has an opinion to express or an agenda

to advance, so the information is biased. In certain cases, an article is actually created by a company's marketing department to get you to buy something. In this case, the piece is not created to forward an academic idea at all. On the web, you may encounter popular sources, and they should generally not be included in your scholarly research. Examples of popular sources include:

- » Sponsored pages, often called advertorials
- » Online magazines or blogs

Just because sources are popular doesn't mean they aren't accurate or well-written. They usually contain true information and are written in a way that interests and engages a general audience. But because they don't undergo the same rigorous peer review and editorial process as scholarly articles, they are not always suitable for establishing credibility in your research. They should generally be avoided for academic work.

### **Wikipedia**

Wikipedia is not considered a scholarly source for several reasons. Based on all the information we've covered, can you name a few?

- » It has no clear author, so there's no way to assess the author's credentials.
- » It doesn't have a publisher or editorial board, and it's not collected in a scholarly journal or database.
- » Though many editors collaborate on its records, there is no peer review or formal verification process.
- » There is no final or published version that can be cited, since many entries change daily or even hourly.
- » Its intent is to introduce a topic to a general audience, not to address academic or professional peers.

### **Next Steps**

- » Next, we're going to move into a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, it's on to Lesson 3, Verifying Online Sources, where we'll talk further about evaluating sources you find online.
- » At the end of Module 2, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in this lesson.

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MODULE 2: ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY  
LESSON 3: VERIFYING ONLINE SOURCES

**Title**

Establishing Credibility

Module 2, Lesson 3

Verifying Online Sources

**Introduction**

In this lesson, you'll learn how to assess the content of a website to determine whether it's appropriate for your academic research. We'll cover:

- » How websites are similar to, and different from, other publications
- » Concerns unique to content published online
- » What a website's address can tell you about its credibility
- » Where else on a webpage to look for the information you need

**What's Out There**

Information is published online for a variety of purposes. There are many types of websites, and not all of them will be appropriate for academic research.

- » **Personal sites and blogs** are usually maintained by individuals for their own enjoyment. Although the author of a blog may have authority in his or her field, blog posts lack the indicators of scholarly publishing, such as peer review.
- » **Commercial websites** are maintained by for-profit companies. It's important to remember this bias when assessing their credibility.
- » **Informational websites** are maintained by organizations or institutions for the purpose of sharing research or other information. You'll need to think about what authority these sources have, in the real world as well as online.
- » **News and journalism** online comes from a variety of sources, some more reliable than others.

Next, we'll look at how to begin distinguishing between these types of sites.

## **Authority**

In Lessons 1 and 2, you learned how to evaluate sources using the A-B-Cs of authority, bias, and content. It's just as important to use these analytical tools when evaluating websites, because publishing online is so simple that virtually anyone can do it.

Let's explore how these ideas apply in the online context. First, we'll return to the idea of authority. Who wrote the content? Who created or sponsored the page?

A credible website should provide information about the person or organization responsible for its content. Just as with a published source, a website's author should have experience and credentials in his or her field, and the sponsoring organization should be well-established and respected in the field. You can also use a search engine to find additional information about an author if you're unsure. Most scholars will have some sort of presence online.

Some webpages may not list an author. This isn't necessarily a red flag; in this instance, the organization that owns the page is claiming authorship. So you will need to evaluate the organization in the same way you'd evaluate an author: Is the organization qualified to make statements about this topic? What is its background and experience? Does it exist (and is it well-known) outside of the web?

A credible site should be clear and up-front about who owns the site and how users can contact the owner. This information should be clearly visible.

## **Bias and Content**

Just as with scholarly sources, sources you find online should be free of bias. Thinking about a website's purpose can help you determine whether its content might be biased.

Ask yourself: Why was the site created—to educate, to share information, to argue an opinion, to sell a product? Does the site make money from advertising? Is it trying to sell you something?

A credible website should have a mission statement or an "about" section that explains its purpose and discloses any conflicts of interest. If it contains advertising, ads should be clearly labeled.

Take a look at this example from the University of Michigan's Education Policy Initiative. The "History" and "Mission" sections explain why the site exists and what it does. The links that follow provide additional information about the sponsoring institution and the people who create the content.

Finally, content from a credible website should still meet your criteria for a scholarly work:

- » It should be well-written and error-free

- » It should use appropriate language and a neutral tone
- » It should cite sources to support its assertions

### **Finding Additional Support**

You can apply other strategies to assess online sources for credibility.

#### *Currency*

As with printed sources, currency is important in finding a credible website. As always, you should be able to find a publication date or date the site was last updated.

In an online setting, the site's appearance and functionality can sometimes provide clues to its currency. If the layout or graphics look dated, it's possible that the site has not been updated in a long time. A credible site should also be functional and relatively easy to use. If you are encountering lots of broken links or are unable to complete a search, that might be a clue that the site is out of date.

#### *Sources*

A credible site will usually provide references. Sometimes these may take the form of other links to high-quality websites or articles on the same topic, rather than a formal bibliography. You may also find links embedded in the text of an article, rather than listed at the end. These links can help you get a sense of the site's context, which we will discuss next.

Remember, it's possible that a credible source may not meet every single one of the criteria we've discussed here. But looking for these pieces of information is a good way to get a sense of where a source is coming from, who is behind it, and what its purpose is.

Next, you will learn some specific ways to begin your assessment of whether a website is suitable for academic research.

### **Check the URL**

Every webpage has a unique address called a URL (or uniform resource locator). The main part of a page's URL can sometimes give you a start on determining whether it's a good source.

In particular, a page with a .gov or .edu extension is more likely to come from a credible source. A website with a .gov extension, like [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov), may be used only by a United States government agency.

A website with a .edu extension, like [www.umich.edu](http://www.umich.edu), may be used only by a college or university. However, .edu sites sometimes also host the personal content of professors or students – so you will need to explore carefully.

Other common extensions include .org, .com, and .net, among many others. Although .org and .com were originally intended to indicate nonprofit and for-profit status, respectively, there are no rules in place to enforce this distinction. So you can't make any assumptions based on a .org or .com address; you will need to delve further to find out who owns the source.

### **Check the Perimeter**

When you're assessing a website for credibility, the information you need is often found around the edges of the page, especially the very top and very bottom. Take a look at this example, an abstract for an article about testing in schools.

A quick glance at the top of the page gives you some information about who is responsible for its content: it's produced by Education Policy Initiative, and the logo on the right is for the University of Michigan. So you know right away that this site is probably a good authority on the subject.

You also know that this is likely to be an unbiased source of information on this topic. Educational institutions usually exist to do research and share information, not to advance a certain viewpoint or sell a product.

There are clear and straightforward navigation options, including an "about us" link. Moving down the page, we see some other important information.

- » There's a date to indicate when the content was published.
- » The author's name is given, along with a link to more information about his affiliation and credentials.
- » When we open the PDF of the article, we see it includes a list of references from scholarly and government sources.

There are many elements present to support this being a credible source for academic research.

Now let's look at a second webpage on the same topic of testing in schools. The top of the page tells us that the website belongs to the Association of Test Publishers. No author is named. Think about how the publisher here relates to the topic at hand. Does the publisher have authority? What about bias?

Now let's move to the bottom of the page. Scanning the text of the article, we see phrases like "Most...experts would agree" and references to the work of "independent researchers." But no citations or links are provided to support the author's assertions. And there's no indication that this content has been reviewed or edited by a peer in the field.

These things don't mean that there's necessarily anything incorrect or untrue in the article we're looking at. It simply means that we can't tell. While this company may have some authority in the field, it is inherently biased, and it hasn't provided any sources to back up the statements in the article. So our assessment of this source tells us that it's not appropriate for use in academic research.

### **Next Steps**

Have you thought any more about the question we asked at the beginning of this module? Which source would you trust the most for information about a hurricane – Facebook, the evening news, or the website of the National Weather Service? Now that you've learned how to establish credibility, the answer may be clearer to you.

- » Next, we're going to move into a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in Module 2.
- » After you've completed these activities, it's time to move on to Module 3, where you will learn how to cite these sources in your academic papers.

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MODULE 3: CITING SCHOLARLY WORK  
LESSON 1: CREATING CITATIONS

**Title**

Citing Scholarly Work

Module 3, Lesson 1

Creating Citations

**Introduction**

You're doing research for a paper on youth voting. You come across two articles that provide different numbers for how many young people voted in the most recent election. One source quotes a specific expert and includes a list of citations; the other source says that its numbers come "from a recent poll." Which one seems like a more trustworthy source? Why?

Citing your sources means that you give credit for the ideas and information you've used in your paper. It builds credibility and helps readers understand where your ideas come from. In this lesson, you'll learn:

- » What elements make up a citation
- » Where to find the necessary information for a citation
- » How to compose your own citations

**Why Cite?**

Citing your sources serves you, and it serves your readers. When you provide citations for the work you've used in your paper, it gives readers a way to follow up and find more information on a topic. A good citation points your readers directly to the source.

Using proper citation also gives you credibility as an author. It allows readers to distinguish between your ideas and those of your sources.

**Citation Styles**

There are a variety of ways to format citations. Citation styles are issued by the major professional organizations in a discipline or field. The citation styles are published in books called style guides. For example, the Modern Language Association, or MLA, has its own citation style that is often used for papers on language, literature, and the humanities. MLA is one of the most common styles used in high school. You may also be asked to use APA style, issued by the American Psychological Association. There



are also special citation styles for medicine, legal writing, and journalism that you may encounter in college. If you're unsure which citation style to use, check your assignment or ask your teacher.

Most citation styles include the same basic pieces of information, but may require that the order or format of those pieces be a little different. For example, some styles use full first names, while others use just a first initial. Some styles capitalize every word of a title, and some capitalize only the first word. Depending on the style, you may use a period after each piece of information, or a comma between some of them. You may need to use a single space, or you may need two spaces. These are small details, but it's important to pay attention to them as you create your citations. Formatting your citations correctly and consistently tells your readers (and your instructor) that you understand the conventions of academic writing.

Here, you can see the MLA and APA versions of citations for the same article.

### Elements of a Citation: Print

Print materials include books, popular magazines, and articles from scholarly journals. A complete citation for a print source will point your readers to the exact source you used — including the correct edition number, page number, or format.

Common elements of a citation include:

- » **The author's name:** Who wrote the work? Usually this is a person or multiple people, but sometimes the author is an organization or institution.
- » **Title:** What is the exact title of the work? If it appears within a larger work—like an article in a journal or a chapter in a book—what is the title of the larger work?
- » **Publication date:** When was the work published? Are there multiple editions or revisions? If more than one date is given, use the most recent one in your citation.

For both books and journal articles, MLA style requires the author's name, the publication title and/or article title, the publication date, and the format, such as print or web.

Books also need the place of publication and the name of the publisher. If more than one place is listed, use the first one in your citation. Articles need volume, issue, and page numbers.

If you use a library database to download a book or article originally published in print, you must include the name of the database you used, the medium (the web, rather than print), and the date you accessed the material.

### **Elements of a Citation: Online Sources**

For websites, the information required for a citation is slightly different, but the goal is the same: You want to pinpoint the exact version that you used in your research. To cite a website in MLA style, include as many as possible of the following:

1. Author's name
2. Page or article title
3. Website title
4. Name of the organization or institution that produces or publishes the site
5. Publication date
6. Format (print or web)
7. Date you accessed the site

MLA style does not require that you include the website's address, but you should record it for your own reference. Some other styles, including APA, do require that the web address be included in a citation.

Do you see some common threads among these citations for different types of material? Regardless of what kind of work you're citing, the goal is to record who wrote the work, who published the work, when it was published, and what it's called.

### **Collecting Citation Elements**

So, where do you start finding the elements of a citation? When you're looking at a book, you can find most or all of these elements at the beginning of the book, on the title page and the copyright page. If you're looking at a journal article, you can usually find information at the top and bottom of the page, and at the beginning or end of the article.

But the best time to find and record this information for a book or journal is at the beginning of your research process. When you're searching a database, you can find a complete citation for each search result. Keep all of this information with your notes for later use.

Some databases will also generate a citation in your desired format. Also, consider using citation management software to track your sources as you go. Some citation management programs are free, and your school may subscribe to others. Ask your librarian about the best citation manager to use.

You may have to look a little harder to find the information necessary to cite a website. Look at the top or bottom of the page to find information about the author, the page and site title, and the organization that owns the site. You won't always find a publication date.

If you're having trouble finding information on a website, look for an "About Us" link. This is usually a good way to find out the owner or creator and get more information about the site.

### **Composing a Citation**

When it's time to put together your citations, you'll need the information you've gathered about your sources — but you'll also need information about what is required for a particular citation style. Your library should have a copy of the style guide you need or the online version of the style guide.

Using your style guide as an example, plug in the information from your source material, making sure that all the elements are present. Double-check to be sure you've used capital letters, italics, and punctuation exactly as your style guide specifies.

If you don't have your style guide handy, the OWL at Purdue University is an excellent website for questions about MLA style, APA style, and using sources in your writing. It's a free, reliable site that doesn't require you to register, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

Citation management software can give you a "head start" by formatting a citation from the information the program can gather. But these programs are far from perfect. It's very important to double check that the resulting citation includes all of the necessary pieces of information. For example, your software can probably find the title and URL of a website, but it doesn't know how to visit the About Us page to find the name of the website's owner. You'll need to locate that information and add it; otherwise, your citation will be incomplete.

### **Examples: Print and Database Sources**

Now that you know where to find the information needed for a citation and how to compose one, let's take a look at some examples.

Here's the database information for an article on the writing of the Brontë sisters. This excerpt includes all of the necessary elements of a citation: author, article title, journal title, volume and issue number, publication date, and page numbers.

Now, look at how these elements appear in an MLA and an APA citation. Most of the same elements are present in both citations, but you can see that the citations look different: the pieces are in a different order, some items (like the author's name) are formatted differently, and different words are capitalized.

### **Examples: Web Sources**

Next, let's look at sample citations for a website. Here, you can see that there's less overlap between the elements required by the different citation styles.

MLA wants you to say who owns the website and when you looked at the page. APA wants you to provide the URL so that readers can find the page themselves. APA does not include the date accessed.

### **Special Sources**

In some cases, you may need to cite a source that's in a different form than the ones we've discussed here, like an image, a government publication, video, sound recording, or a letter or email. Your style guide will include information about how to cite these special sources.

If you're stuck or can't figure out how to cite a different type of source, remember that your librarian can always help.

### **Next Steps**

- » Next, you will complete a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, it's on to Lesson 2, Citing and Paraphrasing.
- » At the end of Module 3, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in this lesson.

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MODULE 3: CITING SCHOLARLY WORK  
LESSON 2: CITING AND PARAPHRASING

**Title**

Citing Scholarly Work

Module 3, Lesson 2

Citing and Paraphrasing

**Introduction**

Now that you understand the elements of a citation, it's time to take a look at how to incorporate citations into the main body of an academic paper. In this lesson, you will:

- » Gain an understanding of when and what to cite in your work
- » Learn the difference between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing your sources
- » Learn how to cite sources within the body of your paper

**When to Cite**

When do you need to cite a source? Each time you incorporate someone else's information or idea into your own work, you must provide a citation. So, even if you are using your own words to describe another person's idea, it's still necessary to cite.

It's not always necessary to cite facts that are broadly known and accepted. These kinds of facts are called "common knowledge." For example, you don't need to provide a citation for the statement that Washington, D.C. is the capital of the United States. This is a widely known fact that can be confirmed in a variety of sources, and it's something that a good part of the population knows.

But you would need to cite a statement that the population of Washington, D.C. was 601,723 in 2010. This number is not common knowledge that most people would be aware of. Providing a citation here tells the reader whose statistics you are using.

There's no one set of guidelines about what information constitutes "common knowledge" and therefore does not need to be cited. Many experts recommend seeing whether a piece of information is available from a variety of sources. If it's published in a number of places, it's more likely to be common knowledge.

Common knowledge also varies between different groups. Think of your audience and ask whether this piece of information is something most of them already know.

If you are unsure about whether a citation is necessary, it's always better to provide one. It's much better to cite too heavily than to run the risk of plagiarism.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without providing proper credit. When you think of the word "plagiarism," you might think of someone downloading a paper from the Internet or copying a classmate's work. But plagiarism is often not intentional, and it's much broader than just copying someone else's work. It can be as simple as:

- » Failing to include a citation for an idea you've restated in your own words
- » Paraphrasing in language that is too close to the original, or
- » Forgetting to put quotation marks around content from another writer's work

As a writer, you are responsible for avoiding plagiarism — and there's really no room for accidents. It's essential to be conscious of giving credit to your sources. Remember: When in doubt, cite.

### **Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing**

There are different ways to use information from your sources in your own writing.

**Quoting** is the most straightforward: you use another writer's words exactly as they appear in the source material. When you quote a source, you must enclose the quoted material in quotation marks. This gives readers a visual cue that these are not your own words.

**Paraphrasing** means stating someone else's idea in your own words. When you paraphrase, you don't use quotation marks, so it is essential to reword significantly enough that the wording and sentence structure are your own.

**Summarizing** is writing your own description of a larger work or a body of ideas. As with paraphrasing, a summary needs to be your own words. No quotation marks are used here, so it's very important to distinguish your writing from the source's.

Whether you're quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing information from a source, you must provide a citation.

### **In-Text Citations**

In general, a citation has two parts: a brief mention of the source within the body of the paper, and a more detailed list at the end of the paper, called a Works Cited page. Here, we'll be talking about the former type, which are called in-text citations.

In MLA and APA styles, an in-text citation is a brief mention of the source that appears within a set of parentheses. In-text citations follow quotations, paraphrases, and summaries that

appear as part of your text. MLA uses the author-page style of citation, which consists of the author's last name plus the page number where the quote or idea appears in the source material.

Sometimes it makes sense to incorporate the author's name into the sentence itself. This is fine to do, but you always need to include a page number in parentheses for print sources. The purpose of this citation is to tell the reader that the quote comes from page 23 of a publication by an author named Harris. If the reader wants to know more about this publication, she can look at the Works Cited page at the end of the paper, which will include a complete citation for this source.

APA style uses the author-date style rather than author-page, so an APA citation includes the author's last name and the year of publication. This citation looks slightly different, but it serves the same purpose: it gives the reader the information she needs to find a more detailed citation at the end of the paper.

### **In-Text Citations: Websites**

For a source that has no page numbers, like a website, simply include the author's name, which will allow your reader to find the matching citation in the Works Cited list. As when citing a print source, you can provide the name in parentheses or incorporate it into your sentence.

### **Offset Citations**

Sometimes you will need to use a longer quotation as a part of your work. Rather than being inserted into the rest of the text, longer quotations should be indented to make the distinction clear to the reader. Check your style guide to find the cutoff for when to indent, or offset, a quotation. In MLA style, offset a quotation when it makes up four or more lines of text.

Notice that when you offset a quotation, you don't use quotation marks around it. In this case, the formatting provides a clue to the reader that this is quoted material.

If the quoted material makes up less than four lines of text, it should appear as part of a normal paragraph, even if multiple sentences are quoted.

### **Next Steps**

- » Next, you will complete a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
- » Then, it's on to Lesson 3, Works Cited, Bibliographies, and Notes.
- » At the end of Module 3, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in this lesson.

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MODULE 3: CITING SCHOLARLY WORK  
LESSON 3: WORKS CITED, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, AND NOTES

**Title**

Citing Scholarly Work

Module 3, Lesson 3

Works Cited, Bibliographies, and Notes

**Introduction**

Now that you know how to create citations and how to cite your sources within the body of a paper, it's time to create the remaining piece of your citation system: a list of complete citations that appears at the end of your paper. In this lesson:

- » You'll learn how to create a Works Cited page.
- » You'll learn how Works Cited differs from a bibliography.
- » You'll also learn how to use notes to provide your readers with additional information.

**Tracking Your Sources**

In Lesson 1, you learned how to find and collect the elements necessary for a complete citation. Having all of this information handy will make it much simpler to compile your Works Cited page. There are several ways to keep your sources organized as you do your research:

- » Fill out a note card for each source. Each card should include a complete citation for the source, and you can also use it to make notes about how the source is useful for your paper.
- » Create a research log: a word-processing document or spreadsheet that lists each source, along with your notes.
- » Use a citation management program to save your sources as you do your research. Most of these programs allow you to add notes and tags to your sources to help you stay organized.

Use whatever method is most efficient for you. If you're having trouble tracking down a piece of information you need for a citation, ask your librarian for help.



## Works Cited

As you know, in-text citations tell the reader which ideas and facts come from your source material. At the end of your paper, you'll include a comprehensive list of all the sources you've cited. In MLA style, this section is called Works Cited. APA style calls it the References section. In this lesson, we'll use these terms interchangeably.

In MLA and APA style, references are listed alphabetically by author. In other styles that use numeric citation, the list of references will be numbered in the order they're cited within the text. In both cases, the goal is that readers can see a citation within the text and refer to the Works Cited page to get the full information about the source used.

Here's an important note: If a source is cited in your paper, it must be listed in the Works Cited. The opposite is also true: Every source included in your Works Cited must be cited somewhere in your paper.

## Creating Your Works Cited Page

To create your Works Cited page, add sources to the page as you cite them. This means that you'll be transferring your source information from your note card, research log document, or citation management system. As you add sources to your Works Cited page, be sure that:

- » Citations are formatted according to your style guide
  - All the necessary elements of each citation are present
  - Punctuation, capitalization, and italics are used in keeping with your style guide
- » Every in-text citation has a corresponding entry on the Works Cited page

Organize your citations in alphabetical order by the author's last name. If you've cited more than one source from the same author, alphabetize those sources by title. For entries following the first one, you'll replace the author's name with three hyphens.

## Works Cited vs. Bibliography

You've probably heard the word "bibliography" used to talk about a list of citations. It's important to note that a bibliography is **not** the same as a Works Cited page.

As we've discussed, a Works Cited page is a list of the sources cited within the text of your paper, and only those sources. It does not include notes, and it's formatted as a single alphabetical list.

A bibliography is broader and more extensive; it's a list of every source you used while researching your paper, whether or not you cited them specifically within the paper. Bibliographies may contain notes about the sources listed, and they may be split into subsections based on subject.

In academic work in some cases, you may not be asked to prepare a bibliography. If you're not clear on what your teacher is asking for, be sure to get more detail about what's expected of you. You don't want to do the extra work to prepare a bibliography unless it's required.

### **Endnotes and Footnotes**

What if there's a great article on your topic that you didn't cite, but you think your readers would be interested in? You can do this by including notes in your paper. Notes are a way to provide additional information and suggestions for further reading. You will see them used in the articles you read in your research. And if you aren't using them in your writing now, you will use them in college-level work.

A note has two parts: a superscript number within the text of your paper, and a corresponding entry in a numbered list. Within the text, use a superscript number to indicate each note. The text of the notes themselves can appear on a separate page at the end of your paper—these are called endnotes. Or, the notes can appear on the same pages as the superscript numbers—these are called footnotes. MLA style prefers endnotes rather than footnotes.

You might want to use a note to point readers to further articles on a topic; these are called bibliographic notes. Or you might use a note to give additional information about a statement; these are called content notes.

Remember that notes are optional and should be used sparingly, if at all. If notes are overused, you run the risk of overwhelming your reader with information, or distracting her from the main flow of your ideas.

### **Next Steps**

We started this module by comparing two sources that provided statistics on youth voting. One included footnotes and citations, while the other gave its source as “a recent poll.” Now that you know more about how and why citations are important, which of those sources seems like a better bet for your academic research?

- » Next, we're going to move into a few practice activities related to what you've just learned.
  
- » Then, you'll take an assessment of what you've learned in Module 3.

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MODULE 1 | LESSON 1  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Evaluating Databases**

In this activity, you will practice evaluating databases and determining which ones are most suited to your research needs.

Select a research topic of your choice. Then visit your library's website to see what databases are available. Select the top three databases for your topic, and include a brief explanation of why you selected each one. Next, rank them in order of their usefulness for this topic and explain why you ranked them in the order you chose. Finally, investigate the access restrictions (if any) for each database, and explain what you would need in order to access each one.

Your response should include:

- » A brief description of your topic
- » A paragraph giving the names of the three best databases for this topic, and a brief explanation of why you chose each one
- » A paragraph in which you rank the databases you selected from most useful to least useful and explain why you ranked them in the order you chose
- » A paragraph explaining the access restrictions for each of the three databases

**Sample response**

For my research topic, I decided to look for information about the life of Anne Frank. After visiting my library's website, here are the top three databases I picked:

- » History Study Center: I chose this database because it offered "historical research information, including primary and secondary sources." Anne Frank is a historical figure, so this seemed like a good fit.
- » JSTOR: This database "offers scholarly journals, conference proceedings, primary source materials, and books covering the fields of humanities, social sciences, math, and sciences." Although this database has a broader focus, it includes history, so I thought it would be a good place to search.

- » Biography in Context: I chose this database because it says it includes “biographical information on people from throughout history, around the world, and across all disciplines and subject areas.” Since I am looking for biographical information, this seemed useful.

I ranked the databases in the following order:

1. Biography in Context
2. History Study Center
3. JSTOR

I put Biography in Context first because I am specifically searching for biographical information; this database has the most overlap with my research topic. I put History Study Center next because it focuses on history and is likely to have useful information about my topic, which is a historical figure. Finally, I put JSTOR third because of my three databases, it is the most general. It’s likely that all three databases will offer some good information about my topic.

For my last step, I checked to see what I needed to do in order to access these resources. JSTOR and Biography in Context are both available remotely, so all I need in order to access those databases is my library card and a password I create. However, History Study Center is available only on-site, so I would need to make a trip to the library in order to use it.

MODULE 1 | LESSON 2  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Changing Your Search String**

In this activity, you will practice adjusting your search string to yield more useful results.

Select a research topic and a database of your choice. Perform a simple search for your topic. Next, choose a synonym or related term, and search on that term instead of your original one. Review the results and describe how they are different from the first set. Then use a Boolean operator (AND, OR, NOT) to adjust your search. Review the results and describe how they are different from the first set. Finally, decide which set of results was most useful for your search and explain why.

Your response should include:

- » A brief explanation of your topic
- » The name of the database you used
- » A detailed explanation of your initial search and its results
- » A detailed explanation of a search using a synonym or related term, and its results
- » A detailed explanation of a search using a Boolean operator and its results
- » A sentence or two explaining which of the three searches produced the most useful results

**Sample response**

As my research topic, I selected Shakespeare's poetry — in particular, criticism of his sonnets. I chose the JSTOR database because it offers broad coverage of language and literature.

My first search was for *Shakespeare poetry*. This search brought up over 49,000 results. I reviewed the first few pages of search results, and all of them appeared to relate to my topic. Unfortunately, the huge number of results made it impossible to really tell what was there. Also, this set of search results includes articles about some of Shakespeare's poems that weren't sonnets.

My second search was for *Shakespeare sonnets*. I hoped that this more specific related term would get me a smaller set of results, and it did. I had just over 9,000 results instead of almost 50,000. This search set included articles about Shakespeare's sonnets, but also book reviews and other non-useful sources.

Finally, I narrowed down the search by looking for Shakespeare AND sonnets AND criticism. This search got me a set of just over 5,000 results. Looking down the list, some of them were more specialized than I needed or focused on a particular idea I wasn't interested in — but all of the results did focus on criticism of Shakespeare's sonnets in some way.

For this search, my third set of search terms was most useful. Because I used the specific term "sonnets" instead of "poetry" and focused on criticism, I was able to exclude many of the less-helpful sources from my first two searches.

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MODULE 1 | LESSON 3  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Refining Search Results**

In this activity, you'll practice making decisions to improve your search results and minimize information overload.

First, select a topic and database of your choice. Perform a broad search (Search #1) on your topic and describe the results in terms of their number and relevance. Next, adjust your search string with the goal of refining your search results. Describe the results of this search (Search #2). Finally, based on the results of Search #2, suggest at least two additional changes that would be likely to produce a more useful set of search results.

Your response should include:

- » The topic of your search and the database you used
- » The exact search string you used for your first search
- » One paragraph describing your initial search results in terms of number and relevance
- » The exact search string you used for your second search
- » One paragraph explaining how you changed your search in response to the first set of search results, and why you made this choice

**Sample response**

I decided to look for information on the role of First Ladies in the United States White House in the 20th century. I chose the JSTOR database because it has lots of sources that focus on history.

For my first search, I used the search string *women white house*. This search produced almost 200,000 results. As I scanned the first few pages of results, I noticed that although most of them related to the White House, many were talking about personnel, security, or other issues that didn't relate directly to my topic.

Based on these observations, I changed my search string to *first ladies white house*. I thought that this would help to focus my search on the First Ladies specifically, instead of many other areas where women might be involved in the White House. I was surprised to see that this search string brought back even more results, over 450,000. However, when I sorted the results by relevance, many of them talked about the First Ladies, so I could tell that this was a better search term than the broader word “women.” There were also a surprising number of articles about First Ladies’ dresses and fashion, which isn’t relevant to my topic.



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MODULE 2 | LESSON 1  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Pre-evaluating Sources**

In this activity, you will walk through the steps involved in pre-evaluating sources for academic research.

**Directions:**

Select **two** sources for a topic of your choice by considering no fewer than five sources from a key-word search. List citations for your search results, then draft a detailed explanation of your step-by-step approach for selecting the two best sources for this research.

Your response should include:

- » A description of the topic of your choice
- » A list of at least five sources with citations and URLs from a key-word search
- » A 300 to 500-word explanation of your step-by-step approach for selecting the two best sources for this research

**Sample response**

My topic is the women who fought in the U.S. Civil War. After searching for information on this topic, I had a list of five preliminary sources.

1. Women Soldiers of the Civil War. DeAnne Blanton. Prologue, Spring 1993, Vol. 25, No. 1. <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1993/spring/women-in-the-civil-war-1.html>
2. *Women on the Civil War Battlefield* by Richard H. Hall. Review by: Joan E. Cashin. *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Oct., 2007) , pp. 1245-1246. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30052817>
3. Thomas E. Rodgers. Hoosier Women and the Civil War Home Front. *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (June 2001), pp. 105-128. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27792305>

4. Private Albert Cashier as Regarded by His/Her Comrades. Rodney O. Davis. *Illinois Historical Journal*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (Summer, 1989) , pp. 108-112. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40192475>
5. All is Fair: Women and the American Civil War. Janelle Collett. <http://www.feminist.com/resources/artsspeech/remember/rtl6.htm>

My first step was to look at all of my sources for authority and bias. I could tell fairly quickly that sources 2, 3, and 4 all seem to have good authority. They are articles published in scholarly journals, peer-reviewed, and collected in a scholarly database. Sources 2 and 3 are published by university presses, which I know is a good indicator of scholarly content.

For source 1, I had to look a little harder, since I was not familiar with the publication and did not find it using a database. I performed a web search for the author's name and learned that she is a military archivist who has published a book about women who fought in the Civil War. The journal, *Prologue*, is published by the National Archives and Records Administration (a government agency). The tone of the article is scholarly, and it uses primary source material and includes a list of scholarly sources. Based on these observations, I decided that source 2 is an authoritative and unbiased source.

Finally, I looked at source 5. No information is given about the author's background or credentials, and the publisher is a non-scholarly website that doesn't seem to be affiliated with any well-known institution. It's also difficult to tell whether this source is biased. There's no information about the publication process, so I don't know whether this article has been peer-reviewed or even edited. This might be a fine article, but it doesn't have some important indicators of scholarly work, so I decided to exclude it as a source.

My next step was to examine the content of the four remaining articles. They all use language, tone, and style appropriate to scholarly publishing. However, I noticed at this point that the purpose of article 2 is to review a book on my topic, not to provide new information on the topic itself. I decided to exclude it, since it is likely not the best source to give information on my topic.

This left me with sources 1, 3, and 4 — all authoritative, unbiased, and scholarly articles. I noticed that source 3, although it is an appropriate source for academic research, isn't a great fit for my search. It's about the roles of women on the home front and I'm looking for information about women in battle. So I selected sources 1 and 4 as my final results.

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MODULE 2 | LESSON 2  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Assessing Currency**

Currency is an important value in disciplines where information is always changing, such as science, technology, and medicine. In this activity, you will review the meaning of currency and explore how it affects your selection of sources on a topic of your choice.

**Directions:**

Explain what currency means, and list at least two ways to tell how current a source is. Then, perform a search for a topic of your choice. Analyze two of the sources from your search to determine how current they are, and discuss how their currency affects their usefulness for academic research.

Your response should include:

- » An explanation of the meaning of currency
- » A list of at least two ways to determine the currency of a source
- » A brief explanation of your search topic
- » A 200- to 300-word evaluation of two sources related to your search topic and their currency

**Sample response**

Currency means how up-to-date a source is. There are several ways to assess this.

1. How recently was the source updated?
2. What about the sources cited—are they recent?
3. Is newer information available, or has information on the topic changed recently?
4. How important is currency for this topic?

I chose the search topic of infant mortality in the United States. Currency was very important in my search on this topic. The statistics on infant mortality in the United States are collected every year, but it often takes another couple of years before

analysis of those statistics is published. In my initial search, I found a fairly recent article from 2009 (MacDorman MF, Mathews TJ. The challenge of infant mortality: have we reached a plateau? *Public Health Rep.* 2009 Sep-Oct;124(5):670-81.) This article analyzed the most recent data available and concluded that although infant mortality had declined during the 20th century, the rate had stayed almost the same in the first part of the 21st century. This seemed like a good place to start, but I wondered whether a more current source was available.

On further searching, I found that the same authors had published a more recent article on the same topic 2013 (MacDorman MF, Hoyert DL, Mathews TJ. Recent declines in infant mortality in the United States, 2005–2011. *NCHS data brief, no 120.* Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2013). This article analyzed five additional years of data and reaches the opposite conclusion of the previous study: the authors conclude that the infant mortality rate is declining significantly.

In this case, it was very important to check and see whether newer information was available. The newer information contradicted the first source I found, so finding the most current source was essential for this topic.

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MODULE 2 | LESSON 3  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Website Credibility**

In this activity, you will practice determining the credibility of websites using established criteria.

**Directions:**

Find **two** websites to critique: a credible and a not-credible example on the same topic, and list their links. Then write a detailed explanation of why each website is credible or is not credible, using at least **three** criteria for determining credibility from the following list:

- » Signs of academic endorsement
- » Currency
- » Relevance
- » Publishing information
- » Author's credentials
- » Peer review
- » Scholarly language and a neutral tone
- » Scholarly purpose
- » Well-written and error-free
- » High-quality sources and references

**Your response should include:**

- » A brief explanation of your topic and how you found the websites
- » A list of links for two websites on the same topic, one credible and one not credible
- » A 250- to 350-word explanation of why each website is credible or not credible, using at least three established criteria from the list above. You may use screenshots to illustrate your response.

## Sample response

Topic: The health claims of kombucha tea

I have found two websites that discuss the health claims of the popular drink kombucha tea:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/kombucha-tea/AN01658>

[http://www.naturalnews.com/041051\\_kombucha\\_healthy\\_drinks\\_soby.html](http://www.naturalnews.com/041051_kombucha_healthy_drinks_soby.html)

Kombucha is a fermented tea beverage that is claimed to have health benefits including preventing and fighting cancer, arthritis, and other diseases. It is made from black or green sweetened tea that has been fermented by bacteria and yeast.

I conducted an internet search on the terms “kombucha” and “health claims,” which gave me numerous resources to evaluate. Some websites were pro-kombucha and others were anti-kombucha, but that is beside the point. I was looking for a credible source on kombucha’s health claims and a not-credible source on kombucha’s health claims.

For a credible source, I chose the Mayo Clinic based on these reasons:

- » Established, unbiased publisher. The Mayo Clinic: world-renowned, award-winning hospital, established scholarly publisher, clear conflict of interest posting. (authority/bias)
- » The article is written by a credentialed and award-winning published author (Dr. Brent A. Bauer) who is also a board-certified medical doctor and affiliated with a respected hospital and publisher; he specializes in scientific evaluation of alternative therapies. (authority)
- » This site is a consumer resource backed by established, not-for-profit entity with an editorial board to vet content. (authority/bias)
- » Language and tone are neutral and professional. (content)

For a not-credible source, I chose Natural News based on these reasons:

- » Biased publisher: Natural News makes health and scientific claims not backed by scientific evidence; this publication is not part of the scholarly medical publishing community. (bias)
- » The author’s (Dr. Jockers) credentials are less established, certifications seem less academically rigorous, and his background is lacking in scientific research to back health claims. He is affiliated with “maximized living” and acts as a brand ambassador (selling products).

- » The Natural News website is a popular resource that is not affiliated with an established medical or scientific entity. It is a for-profit entity and has no presence outside of the Internet.
- » Language is casual in tone and uses hyperbole (“amazing,” “loaded with”) and attributes kombucha to having a positive impact on Ronald Reagan without substantiating the claim.
- » Sources cited are non-scholarly, including Wikipedia.
- » Website contains ads for other “sensational” products; ads are not clearly marked as such.

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MODULE 3 | LESSON 1  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Creating MLA Citations**

In this activity, you'll practice finding the elements of a citation and formatting them in MLA style.

Choose a topic and find at least three sources on that topic: one book, one journal article, and one website. For each source, locate the elements necessary for a citation in MLA style. Create a citation in MLA format for each source, and write a short paragraph explaining how you found the information you included in the citation.

Your response should include:

- » A brief explanation of your topic
- » Citations in MLA format for three or more sources on your topic, including the following:
  - » At least one book
  - » At least one journal article
  - » At least one website (you must also include the URL)
- » For each source, a short paragraph explaining how you located the information you used in the citation

Refer to the following examples as you create your citations. Each one includes all of the necessary elements for a citation in MLA style.

**Sample book citation**

Last name, First name, and First Name Last Name. *Book Title*. Edition, if given. City of publication: Publisher, year. Medium.

**Sample journal citation**

Last name, First name, and First Name Last Name. "Article title." *Title of Journal* volume.issue (year); page-page. Medium.



**Sample website citation**

Author or editor name (if given). "Title of page." *Name of Site*. Name of publisher or sponsoring organization, date page was updated (if given). Medium. Date you accessed the page.

**Sample response:**

I chose to research the topic of Francis Scott Key writing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Here are the three sources I selected.

Source 1 (book): Vogel, Steve. *Through the Perilous Fight: Six Weeks That Saved the Nation*. New York, Random House, 2013. Print.

I found all the parts of this citation by looking at a record for this book in my library's online catalog. The catalog record includes all of the information I needed: author, title and subtitle, publisher's name, and the date and place of publication.

Source 2 (journal article): Delaplaine, Edward S. "Francis Scott Key and the National Anthem." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Washington, D.C. 46/47 (1944/1945): 13-26. Print.

I located the information for this citation by looking at a paper copy of this article. I found the journal title, volume number, and dates by looking at the headers in the article. They appeared on different pages, so it was important that I scanned the entire article. The author's name and the title of the article appear on the first page of the article. I also checked the page numbers on the first and last pages to determine the page range.

Source 3 (website): The Star-Spangled Banner Project. "Star-Spangled Banner and the War of 1812." *Encyclopedia Smithsonian*. Smithsonian Institution, Nov. 2004. Web. 1 March 2014.

The URL for this site is [http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia\\_SI/nmah/starflag.htm](http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/nmah/starflag.htm).

Finding the information for this citation was not as straightforward as finding it for my other sources. The page title is at the top of the page, but I had to hunt around to discover the title of the site (*Encyclopedia Smithsonian*); it doesn't appear in the large header, just in small type below. The author (in this case, a department) and the date the page was modified were found all the way at the bottom of the page.

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MODULE 3 | LESSON 2  
CONNECT ACTIVITY

**Quoting, Summarizing, and Paraphrasing**

In this activity, you will practice distinguishing between the ways source material is used in academic writing.

Choose a topic and find at least two scholarly sources on your topic. Be sure that both sources include in-text citations. Provide citation information for each source (it is not necessary to format these citations in MLA style).

Within these sources, find two examples where the author has quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material from another source. (Your two examples should not be of the same type — a summary and a paraphrase is fine, but two paraphrases are not.) For each example, write a short explanation (2-3 sentences) of why you selected it.

Your response should include:

- » A brief explanation of your topic
- » Citation information for at least two sources on your topic (both sources must include in-text citations). You do not need to format these citations in MLA style.
- » Two examples of material that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from another source (two different types)
- » A short explanation of each example (including the page number where the example was found)

**Sample response:**

I searched for articles on the topic of the *Harry Potter* books. The following are the citations for the two articles I selected.

In Defense of Harry . . . But Not His Defenders: Beyond Censorship to Justice. Perry L. Glanzer. *The English Journal*, Vol. 93, No. 4, Teaching the Many Conventions of Language (Mar., 2004), pp. 58-63.

Sentences in Harry Potter, Students in Future Writing Classes. Edward Duffy. *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2002), pp. 170-187.

Example of quoted material

Marjorie Heins argues that we need “literature classes that deal with difficult topics rather than pretending they do not exist” (11).

This excerpt comes from p. 63 of the Glanzer article. Here, the author has used quotation marks to show that he is reproducing another author’s words. The quotation marks, parenthetical citation, and mention of the author’s name in the sentence make it clear that this material comes from another article.

Example of paraphrased material

Alison Lurie has remarked on a certain English preeminence in children’s literature as the backdrop to Rowling’s work and success in the genre (6).

This excerpt from the Duffy article (p. 179) is a good example of a paraphrase. He has provided credit to the original source of the idea, Alison Lurie, by including a parenthetical citation and including the author’s name in the sentence. However, the absence of quotation marks indicates that Duffy has used his own words to express this idea.

## MODULE 3 | LESSON 3 CONNECT ACTIVITY

### Refining Search Results

In this activity, you'll practice making decisions to improve your search results and minimize information overload.

First, select a topic and database of your choice. Perform a broad search (Search #1) on your topic and describe the results in terms of their number and relevance. Next, adjust your search string with the goal of refining your search results. Describe the results of this search (Search #2). Finally, based on the results of Search #2, suggest at least two additional changes that would be likely to produce a more useful set of search results.

Your response should include:

- » The topic of your search and the database you used
- » The exact search string you used for your first search
- » One paragraph describing your initial search results in terms of number and relevance
- » The exact search string you used for your second search
- » One paragraph explaining how you changed your search in response to the first set of search results, and why you made this choice

### Sample response

I decided to look for information on the role of First Ladies in the United States White House in the 20th century. I chose the JSTOR database because it has lots of sources that focus on history.

For my first search, I used the search string *women white house*. This search produced almost 200,000 results. As I scanned the first few pages of results, I noticed that although most of them related to the White House, many were talking about personnel, security, or other issues that didn't relate directly to my topic.

Based on these observations, I changed my search string to *first ladies white house*. I thought that this would help to focus my search on the First Ladies specifically, instead of many other areas where women might be involved in the White House. I was surprised to see that this search string brought back even more results, over 450,000. However, when I sorted the results by relevance, many of them talked about the First Ladies, so I could tell that this was a better search term than the broader word “women.” There were also a surprising number of articles about First Ladies’ dresses and fashion, which isn’t relevant to my topic.

# CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 1 | LESSON 1

## EVALUATING DATABASES RUBRIC

SCORE	No Credit = 0	Limited = 1	Underdeveloped = 2	Satisfactory = 3	Exceptional = 4
Characteristics	<p>A research topic is not provided. The paragraph giving the names of the three best databases for the topic is incomplete or missing. The paragraph that ranks the three databases from most useful to least useful is incorrect, incomplete, or missing. The paragraph explaining the access restrictions for each of the three databases is missing or incomplete. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. A paragraph giving the names of the three best databases for the topic, and a brief explanation of why the student chose each one is provided, but may be incomplete. The student's reasoning for why these are the three best databases is underdeveloped or unclear. A paragraph is provided that incorrectly ranks the three databases from most useful to least useful and gives a limited explanation of the rankings. A paragraph explaining the access restrictions for each of the three databases may be missing or incomplete. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. A paragraph giving the names of the three best databases for the topic, and a brief explanation of why the student chose each one is provided. The student's reasoning for why these are the three best databases may be underdeveloped or unclear. A paragraph is provided that correctly ranks the three databases from most useful to least useful but does not clearly explain the rankings. A paragraph explaining the access restrictions for each of the three databases is provided. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. A paragraph giving the names of the three best databases for the topic, and a brief explanation of why the student chose each one is provided. The student's reasoning for why these are the three best databases is correct. A paragraph is provided that correctly ranks the three databases from most useful to least useful and clearly explains the rankings. A paragraph explaining the access restrictions for each of the three databases is provided. The submission is mostly error-free.</p>	<p>A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) A paragraph giving the names of the three best databases for the topic, and a brief explanation of why the student chose each one is provided (2) The student's reasoning for why these are the three best databases is correct and clearly stated. (2) A paragraph is provided that correctly ranks the three databases from most useful to least useful and clearly explains the rankings (2) A clearly written paragraph explaining the access restrictions for each of the three databases is provided (2). Error-free. (1), 10 possible points.</p>

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 1 | LESSON 2

### CHANGING YOUR SEARCH STRING RUBRIC

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>No Credit = 0</b>	<b>Limited = 1</b>	<b>Underdeveloped = 2</b>	<b>Satisfactory = 3</b>	<b>Exceptional = 4</b>
Characteristics	A research topic is not provided. The name of the database used is not provided. The explanations of the three searches are missing or incomplete. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A research topic is provided. The name of the database used is provided. An explanation of a search using a synonym or related term and its results is provided but may indicate a lack of understanding.	A research topic is provided. The name of the database used is provided. An underdeveloped explanation of the initial search and its results is provided. An underdeveloped explanation of a search using a synonym or related term and its results is provided.	A research topic is provided. The name of the database used is provided. An explanation of a search using a synonym or related term and its results is provided. An explanation of a search using a Boolean operator and its results is provided. An explanation of which of the three searches produced the most useful results is provided. The submission is mostly error-free.	A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) The name of the database used is provided (1) A detailed explanation of the initial search and its results is provided (2) A detailed explanation of a search using a synonym or related term, and its results is provided (2). A detailed explanation of a search using a Boolean operator and its results is provided (2). A clear and correct explanation of which of the three searches produced the most useful results is provided. (1) Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 1 | LESSON 3 REFINING SEARCH RESULTS RUBRIC

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>No Credit = 0</b>	<b>Limited = 1</b>	<b>Underdeveloped = 2</b>	<b>Satisfactory = 3</b>	<b>Exceptional = 4</b>
Characteristics	<p>A research topic is not provided. The name of the database used is not provided. The first search string and the paragraph explaining the first search are missing or incomplete. The second search string and the paragraph explaining the second search are missing or incomplete. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. The name of the database used is provided. The search string used for the first search is provided. A paragraph describing the initial search results in terms of number and relevance is provided but may have faulty reasoning. The search string used for the second search is provided. A paragraph explaining how the search was changed in response to the first set of search results and why this choice was made is provided but may have faulty reasoning. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. The name of the database used is provided. The search string used for the first search is provided. A paragraph describing the initial search results in terms of number and relevance is provided but may lack sufficient detail. The search string used for the second search is provided. A paragraph explaining how the search was changed in response to the first set of search results is provided but may lack sufficient detail. The explanation of why this choice was made is unclear or underdeveloped. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. The name of the database used is provided. The search string used for the first search is provided. A paragraph describing the initial search results in terms of number and relevance is provided. The search string used for the second search is provided. The search string used for the second search is provided. A paragraph explaining how the search was changed in response to the first set of search results is provided, with an explanation of why this choice was made. The submission is mostly error-free.</p>	<p>A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) The name of the database used is provided. (1) The search string used for the first search is provided. (1) A detailed paragraph describing the initial search results in terms of number and relevance is provided. (2) The search string used for the second search is provided. (1) A detailed paragraph explaining how the search was changed in response to the first set of search results is provided, (2) with an explanation of why this choice was made (1). Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.</p>



## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 2 | LESSON 1 PRE-EVALUATING SOURCES RUBRIC

SCORE	No Credit = 0	Limited = 1	Underdeveloped = 2	Satisfactory = 3	Exceptional = 4
Characteristics	<p>A research topic is not provided. The list of five sources relating to the topic is incomplete or missing. The explanation is missing or does not clearly outline the student's approach for selecting sources. Limited or no evidence of credibility or lack of credibility. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. A list of sources is provided, but not all sources relate to the topic, and the URLs and citations may be missing or inaccurate. The explanation of the student's approach for selecting sources may be under 300 words or have faulty reasoning. A step-by-step approach is not taken and the response is not always clearly worded. There is limited evidence of credibility or lack of credibility, and a lack of detail. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. A list of five sources relating to the topic is provided, with mostly accurate citations and URLs. An explanation of the student's approach for selecting the two best sources for the research is provided, but may be under 300 words. The explanation takes a step-by-step approach but is not always clearly worded. The explanation includes adequate evidence of credibility or lack of credibility, but may lack detail. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. A list of five sources relating to the topic is provided, with accurate citations and URLs. A 300 to 500-word explanation of the student's approach for selecting the two best sources for the research is provided. The explanation takes a step-by-step approach and is reasonably clear. The explanation includes sufficient evidence of credibility or lack of credibility and is written with sufficient detail. The submission is mostly error-free.</p>	<p>A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) A list of at least five sources relating to the topic is provided, with accurate citations and URLs. (2) A 300 to 500-word explanation of the student's approach for selecting the two best sources is provided. (2) The explanation takes a step-by-step approach and is clearly worded (2). The explanation includes specific evidence of credibility or lack of credibility, and the analysis is written with engagement and detail (2). Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.</p>

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 2 | LESSON 2

### ASSESSING CURRENCY RUBRIC

SCORE	No Credit = 0	Limited = 1	Underdeveloped = 2	Satisfactory = 3	Exceptional = 4
Characteristics	An explanation of the meaning of currency is not provided. The list of ways to determine the currency of a source is incomplete or missing. The explanation of the search topic is missing or unclear. The evaluation of sources related to the search topic and their currency is missing, incomplete, or incorrect. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A limited explanation of the meaning of currency is provided. The student lists at least one way to determine the currency of a source, but it may be incorrect or unclear. An explanation of the search topic is provided. The evaluation of two sources related to the search topic and their currency may be under 200 words, make inaccurate determinations, or have faulty reasoning. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	An accurate explanation of the meaning of currency is provided. The student lists at least one correct way to determine the currency of a source. An explanation of the search topic is provided. An evaluation of two sources related to the search topic and their currency is provided, but may be under 200 words. The evaluation makes an accurate determination of the currency of each source. Contains grammatical or spelling errors.	An accurate explanation of the meaning of currency is provided. The student lists two correct ways to determine the currency of a source. An explanation of the search topic is provided. A 200 to 300-word evaluation of two sources related to the search topic and their currency is provided. The evaluation makes an accurate determination of the currency of each source. The submission is mostly error-free.	An accurate explanation of the meaning of currency is provided. (2) The student lists at least two correct ways to determine the currency of a source. (2) A clear explanation of the search topic is provided. (1) A clearly-worded 200 to 300-word evaluation of two sources related to the search topic and their currency is provided. (2) The response makes an accurate determination of the currency of each source. (2) Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 2 | LESSON 3

### WEBSITE CREDIBILITY RUBRIC

SCORE	No Credit = 0	Limited = 1	Underdeveloped = 2	Satisfactory = 3	Exceptional = 4
Characteristics	<p>The research topic is unclear or is not provided. Links for sources relating to the topic are incomplete or missing. An explanation for why each website is credible or is not credible is inaccurate or missing. The explanation does not use established criteria for determining credibility. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. Links for sources relating to the topic may not include one credible and one not-credible source. The explanation for why each website is credible or not credible may be under 250 words. The explanation uses at least one established criteria for determining credibility and includes limited evidence of credibility or lack of credibility. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. Links for two sources relating to the topic are provided, one credible, one not credible. An explanation for why each website is credible or is not credible is provided, but may be under 250 words. The explanation uses at least two established criteria for determining credibility and includes adequate evidence of credibility or lack of credibility. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. Links for two sources relating to the topic are provided, one credible, one not credible. A clearly worded 250 to 350-word explanation for why each website is credible or is not credible is provided. The explanation uses three established criteria for determining credibility and includes sufficient evidence of credibility or lack of credibility. The submission is mostly error-free.</p>	<p>A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) Links for two sources relating to the topic are provided, one credible, one not credible. (2) A clearly worded 250 to 350-word explanation for why each website is credible or is not credible is provided. (2) The explanation uses at least three established criteria for determining credibility (2) and includes persuasive evidence of credibility or lack of credibility. (2) Error-free. (1), 10 possible points.</p>

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 3 | LESSON 1

### CREATING MLA CITATIONS RUBRIC

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>No Credit = 0</b>	<b>Limited = 1</b>	<b>Underdeveloped = 2</b>	<b>Satisfactory = 3</b>	<b>Exceptional = 4</b>
Characteristics	A research topic is not provided. Citations in MLA format for three sources on the topic are incomplete or missing. An explanation of how the student located the information used in each citation is incomplete or missing. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A research topic is provided. Citations in MLA format for three sources on the topic are provided but may contain errors. Sources may be missing the book, journal article, or website with URL. Three paragraphs explaining how the student located the information used in each citation are provided but may indicate a lack of understanding. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A research topic is provided. Citations in MLA format for three sources on the topic are provided but may contain minor errors. The sources include one book, one journal article, and one website with URL. Three paragraphs explaining how the student located the information used in each citation are provided but may lack detail. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A research topic is provided. Correct citations in MLA format for three sources on the topic are provided. The sources include one book, one journal article, and one website with URL. Three sufficiently detailed paragraphs explaining how the student located the information used in each citation are provided. The submission is mostly error-free.	A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) Correct citations in MLA format for at least three sources on the topic are provided. (3) The sources include at least one book, at least one journal article, and at least one website with URL. (2) A detailed paragraph explaining how the student located the information used in the citation is provided for each of the three sources (3) Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 3 | LESSON 2 QUOTING, SUMMARIZING, AND PARAPHRASING RUBRIC

SCORE	No Credit = 0	Limited = 1	Underdeveloped = 2	Satisfactory = 3	Exceptional = 4
Characteristics	<p>A research topic is not provided. Citation information in any format for two sources on the topic is incomplete or missing. Examples of material that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from another source and an explanation of each example are incomplete or missing. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. Citation information in any format for two sources on the topic is provided but may be incomplete. At least one example of material that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from another source is provided. An explanation of each example is provided but may indicate a lack of understanding. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. Citation information in any format for two sources on the topic is provided. Two examples of material that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from another source are provided, but may not be of two different types (e.g., a paraphrase and a summary). An explanation of each example is provided but may contain slight inaccuracies. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	<p>A research topic is provided. Complete citation information in any format for two sources on the topic is provided. Two examples of material that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from another source are provided. The examples are of two different types (e.g., a paraphrase and a summary). A clearly worded and correct explanation of each example is provided. The submission is mostly error-free.</p>	<p>A clearly stated research topic is provided. (1) Complete citation information in any format for at least two sources on the topic is provided. (2). Two examples of material that has been quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from another source are provided (2). The examples are of two different types (e.g., a paraphrase and a summary) (2) A clearly worded, detailed, and correct explanation of each example is provided (2). Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.</p>

## CONNECT ACTIVITY MODULE 3 | LESSON 3 USING CITATIONS IN YOUR WRITING RUBRIC

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>No Credit = 0</b>	<b>Limited = 1</b>	<b>Underdeveloped = 2</b>	<b>Satisfactory = 3</b>	<b>Exceptional = 4</b>
Characteristics	A research topic is not provided. The passage is missing or incomplete. The passage does not include in-text citations. A Works Cited section is not provided. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A topic is provided. A passage on the topic is provided but may be less than 150 words. The passage includes in-text citations to fewer than three sources in MLA style, and may have significant errors in formatting. A Works Cited section is provided with sources cited in MLA style, but may have minor errors in formatting. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A topic is provided. A 150 to 200-word passage on the topic is provided. The passage includes in-text citations to three sources in MLA style, but may have minor errors in formatting. A Works Cited section is provided with all sources cited in MLA style, but may have minor errors in formatting. Contains grammatical and spelling errors.	A clearly stated topic is provided. A 150 to 200-word passage on the topic is provided. The passage includes correctly formatted in-text citations to three sources in MLA style. A Works Cited section is provided with all sources correctly cited in MLA style. The submission is mostly error-free.	A clearly stated topic is provided. (1) An engaging, clearly-worded 150 to 200-word passage on the topic is provided. (2) The passage includes correctly formatted in-text citations to at least three sources in MLA style. (3) A Works Cited section is provided with all sources correctly cited in MLA style (3) Error-free. (1). 10 possible points.